



Bonsai Society of Dallas

June 2006



Message from the President:

By George Straw

I would like to start off by thanking John Miller for writing something for me last month. I was planning on sending Sandi my message while I was in South Africa but was unable to get Internet access until I got to Cape Town on May 5 which was too late to write something.

I would like to mention the LSBF Convention again and encourage everyone to attend. It is a great opportunity to learn and meet other bonsai collectors and artist.

The trip to Cape Town was a great Bonsai experience. I was picked up at the place I was staying by Dr. Carl Morrow. He is an experienced lecturer and artist. He has also written a book "Bonsai Success in Southern Africa". Carl took me to see the collection and nursery of Gail and Lionel Theron. What a great nursery. I plan on having pictures at the meeting on June 1 for everyone to see. We then went to a private collection of Yvonne and Willie

Romyn. They had some wonderful trees that were mostly collection native trees. One of the interesting things was they way they had their trees displayed. They were on tables and the tables were covered with gray gravel with about a 4 inch border of a small leaved ground cover. I have pictures of that also. (Please see page 3 for pictures) Our third visit was to Rudi Adam, what an interesting gentleman! He is from Austria but has lived in South Africa many years. He also wrote a book that is now out of print. There I was able to see some fantastic trees both private and in his nursery. His apprentice, Marius Boshoss, and he were so interesting to visit with. I could have spent a whole day there but instead only had a couple of hours. Rudi gave me seeds from a native ficus, *Ficus burtt davyi*, sub: congo. If I am successful growing these, I should have a lot of plants. I will keep everyone posted.

Here are a few of the trees that I saw while in Cape Town.

I would also like to mention that the Bonsai Society of Dallas is a 501C4 non profit organization. With that classification, donations made to the club would be tax deductible (check with your tax man). Howard and Sylvia Smith and myself have purchased for the club backdrops to be used at our Bonsai Exhibits. Tom Mozden has been kind enough to donate his time to make them. The backdrops were \$110.00 each. I mention this, because if there is anyone out there that needs additional tax deductions for 2006, please keep the club in mind.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting and sharing my trip with you.



June Program by Mike Smoller

Date: June 1, 2006
Time: 6:30 PM
Place: North Haven Gardens
7700 Northaven
Dallas, TX

Our June presentation will be provided by Andy Rutledge. He will delve into the fundamentals of artistry, examine how those fundamentals are applicable to our endeavor and to the specific aims of bonsai display, and then he will touch on bonsai

critique in the context of artistry.

About Andy Rutledge:
I'm a designer working as creative director for a local agency. I've been trying to grow bonsai since about 1992 or so and I especially enjoy elms and black pines. I used to publish a subscription online bonsai magazine, part of that time as the online wing of Bonsai Today. Currently, I write for

a few design publications and have a monthly column in a British design magazine.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in June!



Other Dates of Interest

- June 17, SSOT - Austin tropical shohin refinement and air layering.
- July 14- 16 - State Bonsai Convention, Corpus Christi
- Sept. 16, SSOT - Austin Panel critique. Workshop, Japanese style scroll.

June Bonsai by John Miller

Usually in June you are slowing down for the summer. But this year, there is a convention next month to get ready for! Last minute to get registration in and be ready for workshops. Also, gotta make sure your trees are provided for for three days and two nights. If you would like to exhibit a tree at the convention, call or email Jesse Willars, 361-946-9030 or j_willars@yahoo.com.

The important things going this month are water, fertilizer, and maintenance. If you have any tropicals, you can add repotting. Also check for any insect or disease problems.

When the temperature gets over 90 and there are no clouds, your trees in pots will be given the hot foot out in the sun. Think of walking barefoot down an open sidewalk. Anything solid will soak up the direct rays and get very hot. It's bad enough when the air temperature goes over a hundred without the sun adding to it. You should do something to block the direct rays of the sun and put a bit of air, however thin, between the material and the pot and/or soil. Afternoon shade helps the foliage but the morning sun can heat up the pot too much. A solid cover on the soil is not very desirable as it makes it hard to water. Long fiber moss on the surface will protect the soil and let water through. Cloth (open weave burlap) would work but does not look very good. Protecting the pot is a harder job. Aluminum foil, shiny side out, has been used but usually does not leave any insulating air space. Some have built wooden boxes the same size as the pot to set the bonsai in. You may figure out something in between. Then when you water, afternoon is the best time to cool down the pot and the plant has overnight to recuperate. Water twice until the water drains freely from the pot, the first time to break the surface tension on the soil particles and then to thoroughly wet the soil.



Maintenance - the act of maintaining. Maintain - to hold or to keep in any particular state. When applied to bonsai, maintenance consists of two aspects. HORTICULTURAL maintenance is keeping the tree in good vigorous health. This encompasses providing proper location, sunlight, water, soil, and fertilizers. Horticultural maintenance must be done before you can be successful in doing ARTISTIC maintenance. Artistic maintenance is continuing the plan you used when you styled the tree. It will develop ramification, grow bark, get smaller leaves, and all the other good characteristics of a great bonsai. Each one of these items above is a chapter in a book, all I can hope to do is help you know when to do some of them.

As the summer progresses, the growth of the deciduous trees will slow also. But you still need to keep an eye out for errant shoots. Keeping scissors with you when watering would let you take care of most of them. Just like in the spring, a shoot too long will thicken the twig too much. The daily (seems like) pruning chore is transferred to the tropicals.

For most of us it is too late to do leaf pruning on normal plants. They have slowed growth almost to the point of dormancy. Of course your tropical species are in their heyday. Prune, leaf prune, and repot to your hearts content.

Tip pinching on flowering species like the crape myrtle will result in fewer flowers but if you let it go they get out of shape. I prefer to try to balance the flower/design question by pinching early. This provides more growing tip to divide the energy and the resulting flower is shorter. It's less showy but more in scale.

Also if you have fruiting bonsai, you should reduce the number of fruit on the tree. The number one goal of the tree is to provide seeds for reproduction and it will starve itself in order to do so. Again, most fruit are too large to look good on a bonsai.

The best way to fertilize bonsai is by using organic fertilizer cakes. The cakes provide a slow constant feeding each time you water. Cakes made with a cottonseed base will provide as acid ph when they break down which we need in any city water system I know of. Making your own is easy and much cheaper than buying them. Chemical fertilizers such as Miracid or Peters may be used a couple of times a month also. My main problem with chemicals is not knowing how many bad salts may accumulate in the soil and also in knowing that the next time I water I am washing the chemicals out on the ground.

As usual, keep an eye open for insect and fungal problems. If you are using the original Garrett juice you should not have any problems. If any fungicidal problems show up, mildew is a possibility, use potassium bicarbonate (does the same as baking soda but contains no sodium). I have used the 1% solution of hydrogen peroxide (dilute one part of the standard 3% peroxide with two parts water) which worked ok but it did burn some tender new growth on an elm cutting. I will only use that in cooler weather.

Garrett Juice by John Miller

Before starting on the Garrett Juice, please note a couple of items.

Any insect program, whether organic or chemical, must be done on a repetitive basis which considers the life cycle of the insect. For example, the spider mite can have a life cycle (from laying eggs to hatching to laying eggs again) as short as five days. Since you will not kill all insects hiding in cracks etc, you need to spray for mites 4 times on a 5 day interval. You wouldn't believe how many times I have told a person they have spider mite damage and get the reply "But I sprayed with ----." Questioning usually reveals that it was sprayed only once after the original damage showed up and the plant was loaded with both mites and eggs.

Any fertilizer program must consider the stability of the product. Liquid fertilizers are water soluble and will be washed out with the next watering, leaving the plant starving. Solid fertilizers require microbial or chemical reactions to release their nutrients and will usually be more active in hot weather, but will remain beneficial for a longer period. Slow release forms, such as Osmocote, fall between these but are generally not recommended for bonsai.

Please note that the commercial version of Garrett Juice found in organic nurseries uses different components and may not have the same insecticidal properties. We use the original version which is one tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp (Maxicrop), molasses, and 5% apple cider vinegar mixed in one gallon of water. You can mix the concentrate, equal parts of fish emulsion, liquid kelp (I use Maxicrop brand), molasses, and 5% apple cider vinegar, and store the concentrate. Then when ready to use it, mix 4 tablespoons (2 ounces) to a gallon of water. It is not recommended to store the diluted solution. The diluted solution might develop mold. I just use any diluted spray as a drench so none is left. I have never had mold on the concentrate--and I just used the last of the two gallons I mixed in April 2005.

As for the time of year, I use it throughout the year. On outside stuff I will start when removing from the winter quarters, spraying the evergreen things. Then I use it on deciduous trees after the leaves open and get a little tougher. I have seen some damage on very tender new Japanese maple foliage and some on the very tips of new dwarf yaupon growth. On yaupons that is ok because you will be pruning it back anyway. But others report they have never seen damage on anything. I have doubts as to the efficiency of foliar feeding of anything. I use foliar spray for insect control. The beauty of using G.J. on a regular basis is that it is not wasted even if there are no insects. The spray will be washed into the soil and utilized as fertilizer.

I use a pump up sprayer and stick the wand between branches to get a fine mist on both top and bottom of the leaves. A trombone sprayer adjusted for a mist can also be used but more care must be taken to completely cover the leaf. A hose end sprayer does not result in a complete coverage.

I would like to use a foliar spray once a week for complete insect control but I can not say I am successful at that. I find that if I get a good weekly start at the beginning of the year and hold the insects in check, that later on it doesn't make that much difference if I miss a week. However, I find that I really need to hold to a pretty good schedule in the greenhouse. As for using it as a drench for feeding plants, I don't really have a schedule. I would prefer to use the organic cakes or pellets for fertilizing. However, I have a tendency to use a drench early in the growing season when the plant doesn't need a lot of fertilizer and as the weather is cool solid fertilizer doesn't break down easily. Also I feel that, like liquid chemicals, it washes out too easily. Later on if I felt that the tree was not getting enough from the solid fertilizer, I would give it a drench of G.J. As for its insecticide properties, I have used it specifically to control spider mites, aphids, loopers and scale. I have found dead caterpillars and bagworms when trimming trees. The grasshoppers left the yaupons and maples alone after they were sprayed (why? I don't really know. I found no dead hoppers). The effect on ants seems to be minimal.

Out of Africa... Photos by George Straw (continued from the President's Message)

41 Tree Forest by Rudi Adam



Yvonne And Wille Romyn collection. Notice the edges of the display



LONE STAR BONSAI FEDERATION CONVENTION

The 2006 LSBF convention will be held in Corpus Christi on July 14-16. Guest artists include Johnny Uchida of California, Bruce Baker of Michigan, and Ed Trout of Florida. It will be at the Holiday Inn, 5549 Leopard St, Corpus Christi. Reserve that date on your calendar, details and reservation sheets are now available on the Corpus Christi Bonsai Club website at www.corpuschristibonsaiclub.com. Some of the material for workshops will be Brazilian Raintree, Natal Plum, Water Jasmine (Wrightii Religiosa), Dwarf Yaupon Holly Fiddlewood, Surinam Cherry, Kidneywood, Texas Ebony, and a mixed group of other Texas Natives.

We Need Items for the Raffle! By Sandi McFarland

As the chairperson for the raffle at the 2007 Convention, I would like to ask you to donate one or more quality items for the raffle! I'd really like items to be bonsai, plant, or oriental art related. If you have something that you would like to donate, or if you have a question about the raffle, please contact me at 972-438-9782 or at potter@pegasuspottery.com. This raffle is one of the ways that BSD gains much needed funds for operations, so please help us out! Thank you in advance for all your help!

I am also looking for a couple of folks who would be willing to help me run the raffle. If you are interested, please let me know! Thanks!

Generous Businesses Give Discount to BSG Members

Present your BSD membership card at the following participating businesses for a 10% discount on merchandise:

- The Bonsai Smiths
- Dream Gardens
- Ray Hernandez's Bent Tree Bonsai
- Pegasus Pottery

We are so grateful to these businesses for their generosity to BSD members! If you have a business and would like to offer a discount to club members, please contact George Straw at GSTRA@aol.com or Sandi McFarland potter@pegasuspottery.com.



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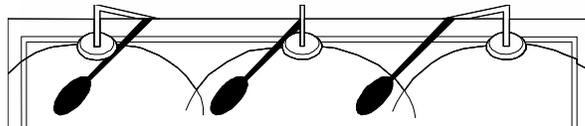
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